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## AMERICAN ART NEWS.

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The office of the AMERICAN ART NEWS is now prepared to procure for patrons and readers expert opinion at a nominal rate on pictures or art objects, to attend to the buying, restoration, framing, cleaning and varnishing of pictures, and to repair art objects, at reasonable rates.

In the interest of our readers, and in order to facilitate business, we are prepared to publish in our advertising columns, special notices of pictures and other art works, with reference to the individual desire of any owner or buyer to sell or purchase any particular example.

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## OLD MASTERS IN VOGUE.

The picture buying public of America appears to be embarked at present on a cruise in auction rooms and dealers' galleries in search of old masters. The sales of modern foreign and American oils and watercolors in the auction rooms and galleries of late, have markedly fallen off and collectors and art lovers are eagerly examining this and that collection of old masters, discussing the attributions of this or that primitive, or example of some later but early painter, and growing more and more interested and eager in the study and pursuit.

This present trend of art taste is only a passing fancy, in the opinion of some collectors and dealers, but we are of the belief that it will endure, and that the appetite will grow with feeding. There are few more fascinating pursuits possible than the tracking of an old master or a primitive to his lair, and the joy of

a collector who successfully proves the authorship, to himself and even to one amiable friend at least, of some cherished find in an old canvas or panel, is delightful to behold.

The impelling cause of the old master interest and pursuit is the unearthing in Europe of late years by dealers and collectors and the importing to the United States, now the great world art mart, of many rare and beautiful examples of the early painters, to their placing in the galleries and homes of wealthy Americans, and the whetting of the public curiosity by the reported enormous sums paid for certain masterpieces. It is said, for example, that Mr. P. A. B. Widener, of Philadelphia, paid over \$100,000 cash, and exchanged pictures worth at least \$75,000 more, for the beautiful example of the great Vermeer von Delft, "Lady weighing Pearls," which he recently secured from the Colnaghis of London, who in turn secured it through Dr. de Groot, the Dutch expert, who found it in the Perier collection in France after its disappearance for nearly a century.

The sum paid by Mr. Widener for this work may seem large, but the public should know that Vermeer was the greatest painter of reflected light in an interior, that ever lived, that only 36 of his exquisite cabinet pictures were left after the powder explosion in Delft in 1555, which destroyed the rest of his priceless works and poor Vermeer himself; and that therefore Vermeers don't grow on every bush, and so the panel was well worth its price.

But while approving of the present American taste for old masters, we must give some needed advice. One may search for and study old masters, but one should not, and need not necessarily neglects the work of modern, and especially of modern American painters. The broad minded collector or art lover, or the one who wishes to be considered broadminded, should and must study and keep pace with the schools and painters of all periods. There is as good work being done today by our American and a few foreign painters, as was ever done by the majority of early artists. An old master is not necessarily a good picture. And this leads us to also warn the collector and art lover against the itinerant purveyor of old masters. A study of the early pictures purchased by the late Robert Hoe and William M. Laffan, the first now on exhibition in this city before sale, well prove what pitfalls surround the art collector who buys, he knows not where nor from whom. Study old masters only in the public galleries and those of reputable and responsible dealers, and don't pursue your search elsewhere. Take warning by Messrs. Hoe and Laffan.

## LINCOLN (NEB.)

The committee appointed to select the model for the statue of Abraham Lincoln have unanimously decided to accept that submitted by Daniel Chester French of New York. The City Club recently entertained Mr. French at dinner in the Lincoln Hotel.

## OBITUARY.

## Hermann Schaus.

Hermann Schaus, the well known art dealer, died at his upper Fifth Ave. residence in this city on Thursday morning last. While he had been in failing health as a sufferer from diabetes, for some years, and his death would not have been a surprise at any time for three years past, his condition had temporarily improved of late, and his family and friends were hopeful, at least of his survival for some time. About a fortnight ago, however, he began to fail rapidly and the end was soon.

Mr. Schaus was born in Bieberich-am-Rhein, Germany, Feb. 6, 1850, and was therefore just entering his 61st year.



Educated in Germany, he came to New York when 18, in 1868, to enter the employ of his uncle, the late William Schaus, founder of the house of William Schaus, and whom he succeeded in 1886. Mr. William Schaus died in 1895. The elder Schaus had established himself in New York in 1849, when he first came from Germany to represent the Paris house of Goupil and Co. His first store was at No. 289 Broadway, from which location, and independently of Goupil and Co., he removed in 1853 to No. 303 Broadway, three years later, or in 1856 to No. 629 Broadway, and later on to No. 204 Fifth Ave., when he retired. In 1907 Mr. Hermann Schaus, who had succeeded to the business and had meanwhile associated with him the late Capt. Conover, removed to No. 415 Fifth Ave., where the firm is now located.

Hermann Schaus, trained by his uncle in conservative business methods, maintained his uncle's traditions, and the house had always had a good and valuable clientele and a high business reputation.

The elder Schaus brought the first Rembrandt, "The Gilder," to America, and sold it to the late H. O. Havemeyer. He also imported the famous Van Dyck portrait of the Duke of Buckingham, now owned by Mr. Harry Payne Whitney, from the Antwerp tri-Centennial of 1900. Both the elder and younger Schaus also imported some of the finest works of Gericault, Goya, Israels, Corot, Rousseau, Diaz, Dupre and other famous European moderns. The black and white department of the house also won a high reputation for the superiority of its examples. Its connections in Europe were excellent and its sources of supply there, the best. During recent years, and since Mr. Schaus' ill health the business has gone on largely through its own inertia, but is still a good one.

The death of Hermann Schaus, following the retirement of Mr. Julius Oehme, removes two of the oldest and most esteemed of New York's picture dealers.

Mr. Schaus was twice married, the second time to Mrs. Johnson of St. Louis, following his daughter's marriage to Mr. Junkin of Philadelphia some four years ago. He is survived by Mrs. Junkin, his second wife and an infant son, Hermann Schaus, Jr. The disposition of the business will probably not be determined for some little time, although it is generally thought it will be wound up.

The government has brought suit in the U. S. Circuit Court in this city, to forfeit the proceeds of the sale of 89 paintings, on Jan. 27 last, at Mendelssohn Hall, for Julius Oehme, the veteran art dealer, formerly of 467 5th Ave., upon the charge of undervaluation in the invoices. It is understood that Collector Loeb consented to the sale, with the stipulation that the amount realized, less the auctioneer's fees and necessary expenses of the sale, should be turned over to the government; also that all bona fide buyers would be protected in their purchases. Mr. Oehme has been seriously ill for some time and is unable to attend to business. Emanuel Blumenstiel, Oehme's attorney, says that "the pictures had been labelled for a comparatively small undervaluation, which did not amount to more than 15% on any picture. Mr. Oehme knew nothing of the undervaluation, as the values on them were placed in foreign countries."

At the annual stockholders' meeting of the Pennsylvania Academy, held last Monday, the report of the directors showed that work in all branches of the Academy has been progressive. The following officers were elected: John F. Lewis, president; Clement B. Newbold, vice-president; Geo. H. McFadden, treasurer; John E. A. Trask, secretary.

## THE "INVITATION" EVIL.

Editor American Art News.

Dear Sir:

You state in your last issue that the jury for the American section of the Roman Exhibition accepted fifteen pictures out of three hundred submitted by the artists of New York and vicinity. This was not because only fifteen were fit to be hung but because there were only that many places left. Practically "all the seats had been sold before the box office was opened." The painters of two hundred and eighty-five of these pictures were put to useless trouble and expense because nearly all the possible places had been pre-empted by "invited" pictures. Evidently many artists are beginning to realize the futility of this proceeding else there would have been a thousand pictures submitted instead of three hundred.

In many exhibitions this practice of "inviting" pictures has become such an evil that it largely takes away the power of the juries—more or less democratic bodies—and places it in the hands of one or but a few. It puts art in the trust class. It strengthens ring influence and makes possible an artistic "boss" system. It places at a disadvantage all rising talent and all artists who live out of town. Moreover it does not tend to raise the standard nor the catholicity of our exhibitions. Roosevelt in a recent speech said: "I don't want the prize in the race to go to the man not fast enough to win. I want them to start even." All artists, young or old, unknown or famous, should be given the same chance to be judged. Under the system of "inviting" pictures the man who has a fine studio, located near other studios, if his work has any merit at all is pretty sure to be "invited" if he enjoys the friendship of the "inviter," when his picture might be rejected if submitted to the jury.

Juries are often accused of narrowness and favoritism. Their sins are as snow compared with the possibilities of the inviting autocracy.

Very respectfully,

Charles Vezin.

N. Y., Feb. 9, 1911.

## ARMOR AT MUSEUM.

A loan collection of Arms and Armor, which in the quality and richness of its individual specimens is almost unique, is now on exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum through April 16. Further mention will be made next week.